LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: July 13, 2004 AGENDA ITEM NO.: 6

CONSENT: X REGULAR: CLOSED SESSION: (Confidential)

ACTION: X INFORMATION:

ITEM TITLE: Chapel and Columbarium for Old City Cemetery

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the attached resolution for construction of a Chapel and Columbarium for Old City Cemetery.

SUMMARY:

In June of 2000, the City entered into an agreement with the Southern Memorial Association (SMA) to provide management of the Old City Cemetery. That agreement states that "no additional structures shall be constructed on Cemetery premises without the express prior written approval of the Lynchburg City Council."

The SMA is requesting approval of construction of a Chapel and Columbarium on the Cemetery property. SMA will raise funds from private donations for construction of the building and to create an endowment for maintenance. The conceptual design has been approved by the Historic Review Board and the Technical Review Committee. The building will be managed and maintained by SMA.

The SMA has provided some additional background information in the attachments to this document including a brief history of the Southern Memorial Association, a written description of the project, a map showing the building location and a budget for the project. Plans for the building have also been forwarded to Council

The Physical Development Committee has reviewed this proposal and recommends approval by Council.

PRIOR ACTION(S):

July 6, 2004 – Physical Development Committee

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to the City

CONTACT(S):

Jane White, Director, Old City Cemetery 847- 1465 Gaynelle Hart, Director of Buildings and Grounds 455- 4406 Bruce McNabb, Director of Public Works 455- 3946

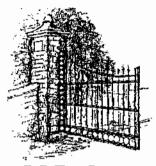
ATTACHMENT(S):

Resolution
Brief History and Mission of the Southern Memorial Association
A Chapel and Columbarium for Old City Cemetery
Map of Building Location
Chapel Project Budget

REVIEWED BY: lkp

BE IT RESOL	VED that the Chapel and Columbarium is approved for construction at Old City Cemetery.
Adopted:	
Certified:	Clerk of Council
096L	

Resolution



OLD CITY CEMETERY

401 Taylor Street
Lynchburg, Virginia 24501
(434) 847-1465
Fax: (434) 856-2004
E-mail: occ@gravegarden.org
Website: www.gravegarden.org

A Virginia Historic Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places

SOUTHERN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

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Frances G. Kemper Vice President

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Jane B. White

Community Board of Advisors

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> Cemetery Director Jane B. White

Administrative Assistant Kathy Wise

> Archivist & Cutator Ted Delaney

Brief History and Mission of The Southern Memorial Association

The Old City Cemetery, founded in 1806, is a Virginia Historic Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of the oldest cemeteries in the United States that has been in continuous use since its founding. More than 20,000 people are buried here—most before 1925—including political, religious, social, and cultural leaders, the city's indigent and "strangers," veterans of every major American war and conflict, and 2,200 Confederate soldiers from 14 states. Three-quarters of those buried here are African and Native American, both free and enslaved. More than one-third are infants and children under the age of four.

The Southern Memorial Association ("SMA") was founded in 1866 to honor the memory of the solders in the Confederate Section. Descendants of that original SMA continued that goal until 1993 when a storm severely damaged the Confederate Section, as well as the very neglected surrounding cemetery acreage.

From that memorable June 4, 1993, storm, the SMA led a community-wide volunteer effort to save and rehabilitate the <u>entire</u> long-forgotten graveyard, expanding its focus past the Confederate Section into the larger cemetery to reveal the unappreciated and unknown history of our city. The SMA is now a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization whose purpose is to manage, preserve, and interpret the Old City Cemetery, or Old Methodist Cemetery, including its graves and gravemarkers, archives, museums, and horticulture.

In a little over ten years, the SMA has accomplished remarkable results:

- 1) The cooperation and support of the City of Lynchburg is vital. In addition to groundskeeping and providing an office, the City provides funding to the SMA to pay two staff members: a part-time Administrative Assistant and a full-time Archivist/Curator. The SMA negotiated a contract with the City to provide this funding. The Cemetery Director, Jane Baber White, who was also the Restoration Chairman for the cemetery rehabilitation, is a full-time volunteer.
- 2) The SMA raises about \$25,000-\$30,000 annually at Christmas to provide for annual operating expenses. Volunteers do the rest!
- 3) The SMA has a bi-racial volunteer Community Board of Advisors and many volunteer gardeners and interpreters for tours and the museums.

- 4) The SMA has raised about \$1,000,000 from private sources over the past ten years to rehabilitate and interpret the cemetery history and horticulture in a variety of ways:
 - a) These funds have been spent to build and furnish four small museums: Pest House Medical Museum, Mourning Museum, Hearse House and Caretakers Museum, and Station House Museum.
 - b) Another huge project involved repairing 800' of an Old Brick Wall, built 1868, which was all that remained of an early cemetery boundary.
 - c) Funds were also used to plant hundreds of trees, shrubs, and add to our nationally recognized antique rose collection. All plantings reflect 19th century horticulture. The cemetery is a member of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, and is actually the only known arboretum of 19th century plants.
- 5) The cemetery now has about 20,000 visitors a year and has become Lynchburg's leading historic visitor destination.

Note: Please consult our website, www.gravegarden.org, for further details concerning the cemetery.

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gravegarden, but has not seriously been considered because of the obvious expense involved. However, were funds ever available, the piping and location are compatible for the fountain feature to function again—someday.

(4) Expanded Horticulture Programs and Activities

There are dreams of potting many of our seedling trees and shrubs and selling them through our gift shop, although this would require significant organization and administrative time. A simple but attractive shade shed, perhaps built by the garden volunteers, could be used for the small transplants and for horticultural activities.

(5) Lighting

Lighting is an issue that has not yet become an issue! There is adequate street lighting at the Cemetery entrance and exit. The gates are closed at night and it is a misdemeanor to be in the Cemetery after dark. The four museum buildings do have automatic light-sensitive exterior-perimeter lighting for security purposes. The maintenance of these lights is sporadic but adequate for now.

(6) Roadway and Parking

IMPROVED PARKING IN THE AREA OF THE CEMETERY CENTER IS PROBABLY THE GREATEST NEED. IT IS POSSIBLE TO WIDEN THE MAIN DRIVEWAY BY ABOUT FIVE FEET ON THE WEST SIDE, ALL THE WAY FROM THE CEMETERY CENTER AND HEARSE HOUSE CARETAKERS' MUSEUM TO THE LOWER SHRUB GARDEN ENTRANCE. The accompanying map, although not a formal presentation, indicates the approximate widening proposal (Attachment, Tab No. 11). The road widening materials used, after a shallow grading, could include crusher run base with a top dressing or surface treatment of our preferred dark burgundy gravel.

The map also shows the number of areas, in addition to the Cemetery Center and the Community Meeting Room, which would benefit from this enhanced parking, including the Pest House Medical Museum, Hearse House and Caretakers' Museum, Potter's Field and Scatter Garden (both still in active use for funerals), Station House Museum, Lotus Pond, Kids' Haven area, Compost Education Center, and Shrub Garden.

The subject of driveway maintenance and parking is complicated by the desire to maintain an "old," informal appearance in keeping with the poetic look of the Cemetery. However, safety (i.e., potholes and washouts), drainage, wintertime snow removal, and adequate parking are important considerations as well.

(7) Cemetery Chapel

Although there is no mention of this in the SMA Master Plan submitted January 31, 2000, there has been occasional reference to the desirability of having a small chapel located in the Cemetery. Other pressing needs dominated development efforts, but the thought of finding a very small, charming old chapel to relocate onto the grounds has resurfaced recently.

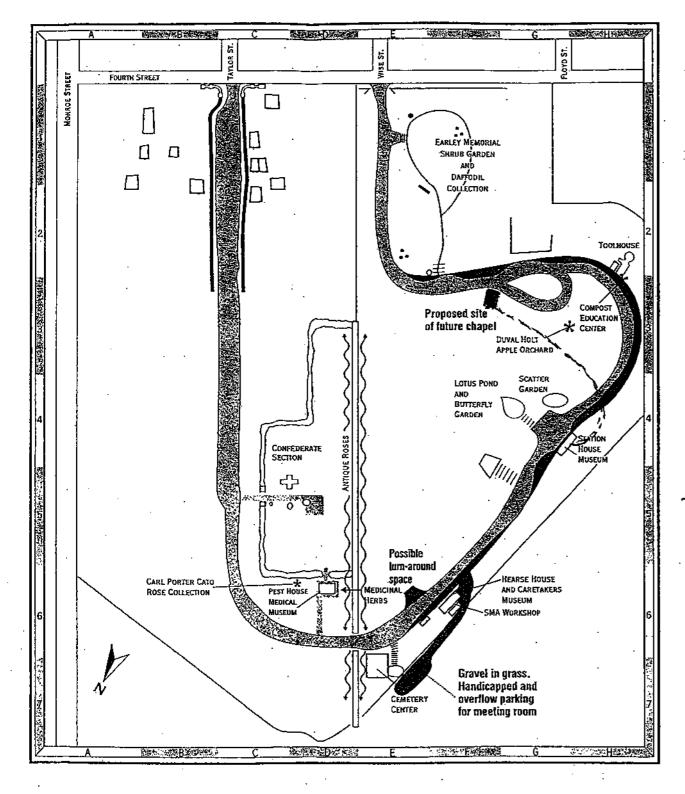
Should the concept become more clearly defined, a possible location has been designated on the Maps of Electricity/Security and Telephone/Water Underground Utilities, as well as the Map of Proposed Widening of Cemetery Main Driveway and Cemetery Center Parking (Attachments, Tab Nos. 8, 9, and 11).

As envisioned, this chapel would be small, simple, handicapped accessible, and conveniently located across from the New Potter's Field and uphill from the Scatter Garden.

Its use for funerals and meditation is obvious, but the recent interest in weddings in the Cemetery opens the possibility for that use as well.

Útilities for lights, an electric fan, and security could be extended from the Station House Museum, but HVAC is not necessary since the building would have only short time period usage. Existing trees would provide the only landscaping.

A chapel is envisioned as falling into the same category of maintenance as the Station House Museum. The relocation and/or restoration of a chapel would be a project of the SMA, including the responsibility for its maintenance, utilities, and insurance.

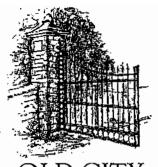


Proposed
Widening
of
Cemetery
Main
Driveway
and
Cemetery
Center
Parking

EXTENSION OF UTILITIES UNDERGROUN PROM STATION HOUSE MUSEUM TO PROPOSED CHAPEL

Qld City Cemetery
Cemetery size: 26 acres
Not to scale

Effective August 2003



OLD CITY CEMETERY

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Lynchburg, Virginia 24501
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Chapel Project Budget

The projected budget for the Chapel project follows:

\$65,000	chapel building modeled after 1880s building using old building materials where visible
15,000	modification for heat, electricity, and security to the primitive building (no plumbing)
25,000	columbatium in the lower level of the chapel
10,000	chapel furnishings and interpretation
<u>\$115,000</u>	
\$85,000	endowment for future maintenance

Although on City of Lynchburg property, the building will be the total responsibility of the SMA. This is the same situation that applies to the nearby Station House Museum (a reconstructed 1898 C&O train station). The electrical service and security system, in fact, will be extended underground from the Station House Museum to the Chapel. They will appear on the same electric bill we already receive for the Station House operation. The endowment fund goal listed above will be added to the existing endowment to cover both the Station House Museum and the Chapel.

We would like to begin construction in Fall, 2004, once funding is in place.